

SARL NEWS - SUNDAY 29 MARCH 2009

You are listening to ZS6SRL, the official Radio Station of the South African Radio League, the National Body for Amateur Radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin every Sunday at 08:15 CAT in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English. To listen to a webstream, visit www.sarl.org.za, click on ARMI and follow the links for details. PLEASE NOTE: for audio via Echolink, connect to ZS0JPL-R.

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Your news reader this morning is (name), (call sign), on 145,725 and 7,066 MHz from Pretoria, with relays on 28,325, 14,235, 10,130, 7,066 and 3,695 MHz SSB, as well as 52,750, 438,825 and 1 296 MHz FM in the Pretoria area. (Other newsreaders please change to suit).

SILENT KEY

We regret to announce the passing of Colin McGee, ZS5YK, after a short illness. Colin was a member of the Durban Amateur Radio Club for many years. To his wife, Hillary, family and friends we extend our deepest condolences and sympathies.

(PAUSE)

In the news today:

ICASA PROPOSES LARGE INCREASES IN LICENCE FEES

NO EXTRA 40 METRES YET

SARL NATIONAL CONVENTION GUEST SPEAKER SAYS SOUTH AFRICA HAS INTERESTING SATELLITE PROSPECTS

You are listening to ZS6SRL. Stay tuned for more detail on these and other important and interesting news items.

On 16 March ICASA published far-reaching proposals to the structure of licence fees. The authority proposes that fees for an amateur radio licence be increased to R120 per annum. To reduce the administrative burden, fees from next year will be payable for a period of 5 or 10 years in advance. In the case of an amateur radio licence, the fee will be charged for a minimum period of 5 years. Radio amateurs may also opt for a 10-year period. As the authority will reduce their administrative costs, some of these savings will be shared with the licensee. If the change in fees is finally accepted a five-year amateur radio license will cost R500 and a ten-year licence R811.

The fees for beacons, change of callsign, guest and special event licences, listener licence, repeater stations including radio link, digipeater and bulletin board, and experimental station for weather reception and retransmission will all be increased to the new minimum fee of R120 per annum.

ICASA states in the document that although the spectrum fees are not intended to raise extra revenue for the national treasury, there is a general principle that the application and annual fees in total should at least cover the cost of spectrum management and monitoring.

ICASA has invited interested persons to submit written representation of their views on the draft revised fees by the end of April.

The SARL Council, at its strategic indaba held at the NARC this weekend, has reviewed the draft revised fees and new structure and will be filing its objection well in time before the deadline. Council's view is that while it understands that the current fee of R27, which has not been increased for over a decade, is due for revision, the proposed minimum fee of R120 represents an excessive increase and that paying five years in advance should be by choice and not compulsory. The Council believes that the current proposals by ICASA are counterproductive to the further development of amateur radio and that the youth and senior citizens will be adversely affected.

Details of the fee proposals can be found in Government Gazette number 32 029. It is available from www.icasa.org.za in the Engineering section.

Radio Amateurs are invited to submit comments of what they believe would be a reasonable increase by sending an email to armi@sarl.org.za. Next Sunday the President's net will be on the air and it presents another opportunity to members to air their views on this issue.

South African Radio Amateurs do not have access to the spectrum 7 100-7 200 kHz yet. Operating on this section of the 40 metre band is a contravention of the regulations and could result in a fine and possible cancellation of your licence.

From ICASA's point of view the changes to the 7 MHz allocation is part of an overall revision of the table of frequency allocations, on which the authority is still working. Based on proposals from the SARL made over a year ago, ICASA has been working on revisions of the regulations. According to the General Manager Engineering, at a meeting between his staff and the ICASA legal department during the past week, the draft regulations have been completed and will be tabled at the ICASA Council meeting on Tuesday. The SARL is in regular contact with ICASA and will report on progress.

Sias Mostert of Sunspace says that South Africa has interesting satellite prospects. He will be delivering the address at the annual dinner at the SARL National Convention in Cape Town. The convention will be held from 24 to 26 April and includes the annual general meeting and a number of exciting social events. Full details and registration forms are available on www.sarl.org.za. Please book early to enable the organisers of the various events to make the final arrangements. The 2009 SARL national Convention is being hosted by the three clubs in the area, the Cape Amateur Radio Centre, the Oakdale Amateur Radio Club and the Boland Amateur Radio Club.

Members of clubs in the Western Cape are especially urged to attend the events to make the SARL National Convention a great success.

CONTEST NEWS

The first leg of the SARL 80 metre QSO party will be run on Thursday evening 2 April starting at 19:00 and ending at 22:00 CAT. It is a phone contest with activity in the band segment 3,600 to 3,700 and 3,700 to 3,800 MHz. The exchange is your call sign, a RS signal report and a serial number commencing with 001. Ten points are earned for every contact with a South African station and 15 points for every contact with a station outside South Africa.

Log and summary sheets must be sent to the Durban Amateur Radio Club, 17 Brownlee Place, Bluff, Durban, 4052 or by e-mail to zs5lp@sharksden.co.za. The closing date for your log submission is 17 April 2009.

The Autumn QRP Sprint will be on the air on Sunday 19 April from 14:00 to 16:00 CAT. It is a fun activity to promote QRP contacts between radio amateurs in Southern African countries.

The ZS Worked All Grid Squares award, sponsored by the Sandton Club, is off to a good start in 2009.

Shaun, ZS5WX, has been awarded an Activator's certificate for his operation in grid KG63, and ZS WAGS Hunter's awards, all for 50 grid squares, have been awarded to Jan, ZS4JAN, on 40 m and 80 m and to Pierre, ZS6BB, on mixed bands. Other awards are currently in the pipeline.

A new email list has been created to communicate details of any operation which may be useful to ZS WAGS grid hunters. To be placed on the list, simply send a blank email to zswags-subscribe@googlegroups.com, and then reply to the confirmation email which you will receive.

CLUB NEWS

The Kempton Park Amateur Radio Technical Society held its AGM on 14 March 2008 and elected the following members to its new committee:

Chairperson: Clive Reeks, ZS6BT; Vice Chair: Viv Dold, ZS6VD; Secretary: Stephen Stuttard, ZR6MRC; Treasurer: Paul Cornelius, ZS6PJC; Nico Janse Van Rensburg ZR6Ql; Donald Dold, ZR6AWO; Johan Nortje, ZU6JJN.

The Adventure Radio Club, ZS1ARC, is busy planning its next 'adventure'. Club members are going to Verneukpan from Thursday 9 to Sunday 12 April 2009 and will be operating ZS3ARC. They will operate on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15 and 10 metres using mainly SSB, with a possibility of PSK and SSTV.

The ZS3ARC team have set a goal this year, and that is to work a WAZS on 40 metres SSB. If you work ZS3ARC on any 5 bands, they will issue you with the VERNEUKPAN-5 award. For each contact made, a QSL card will be issued.

We will now hear what Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, has to say about expected propagation conditions. He says that the expected solar activity will be very low. The geomagnetic field is expected to be predominantly at quiet levels. The expected Effective Sun Spot number for the coming week will be less than 5. The sun's failure to produce sunspots is playing havoc with some frequency prediction programs that use stored sunspot values, and of course, with our HF comms as well. The frequency prediction programs tend to give optimistic results and must be treated with caution.

The imminent change of season with less energy from the sun reaching the Southern ionosphere is having an impact on propagation as well. 15 and 20 m will provide the best opportunities for DX. There is a possibility of 15-m openings towards India from about 13:00 CAT followed by 20 m at 16:00. ZS6BZP have also received reports that 17 m is very useful to the east in the afternoons. Contacts with New Zealand are going to be very challenging. Weak 20 m contacts may be possible with Australia at 08:00. Contacts with Peru are unlikely. Brazil may be worked on 15 m from 14:00 till 18:00 and on 20 m afterwards. At 15:00 there may be 15 m openings followed by short 20 m openings at 18:00 towards Europe. Short, weak contacts with the USA East Coast are possible on 15 m at 20:00.

10 MHz is looking promising late afternoon and after dark for the CW and digital enthusiasts.

Local conditions are going to be good on 40 m during the daytime. 80 m may perform well during the early mornings and late afternoons over the shorter distances, e.g. between ZS5 and ZS6. 30 m may perform well during the middle of the day between ZS6 and ZS1. With winter on its way, 20 m is preparing for hibernation but may still give surprising results around lunchtime.

80 m is the frequency of choice in the evenings. The coming SARL 80 m contest should produce some good contacts.

Remember that this is only a prediction and that HF has the capability to pleasantly surprise you, but you will never know unless you switch your rig on, listen and also call CQ.

Please visit www.spaceweather.co.za for further information.

DIARY OF EVENTS

2 April First leg of the SARL 80 Metre QSO Party; 5 April President's net; 9
12 April ZS3ARC active from Verneukpan; 18 April World Amateur Radio
Day, and 24-26 April SARL National Convention, Cape Town.

SARL News invites clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners. Submit news items if possible in both English and Afrikaans to www.sarl.org.za/newsinbox.asp, not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

The SARL also invites you to listen to the Amateur Radio Mirror International programme every Sunday morning at 10:00 CAT on 145,750 MHz in the Pretoria area, with relays on 7 082, 7 205 and 17 860 kHz. There is also a podcast by ZS6RO. For the webstream and Echolink by ZS6FCS, visit www.sarl.org.za, click on 'ARMI' and follow the links. A repeat transmission can be heard Mondays at 21:00 CAT on 3 215 kHz. Sentech sponsors the ARMI transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a bulletin of the South African Radio League, compiled by Roger, ZR3RC, and edited by Hester van der Walt. Thank you for listening, 73.

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